T E L E G R A P H H I L L B U L L E T I N

No. 9 August 1958

Since the last Bulletin, spring has turned to summer, and the new officers, elected April 9th, have assumed office. Much has happened on the Hill, and new developments are in prospect.

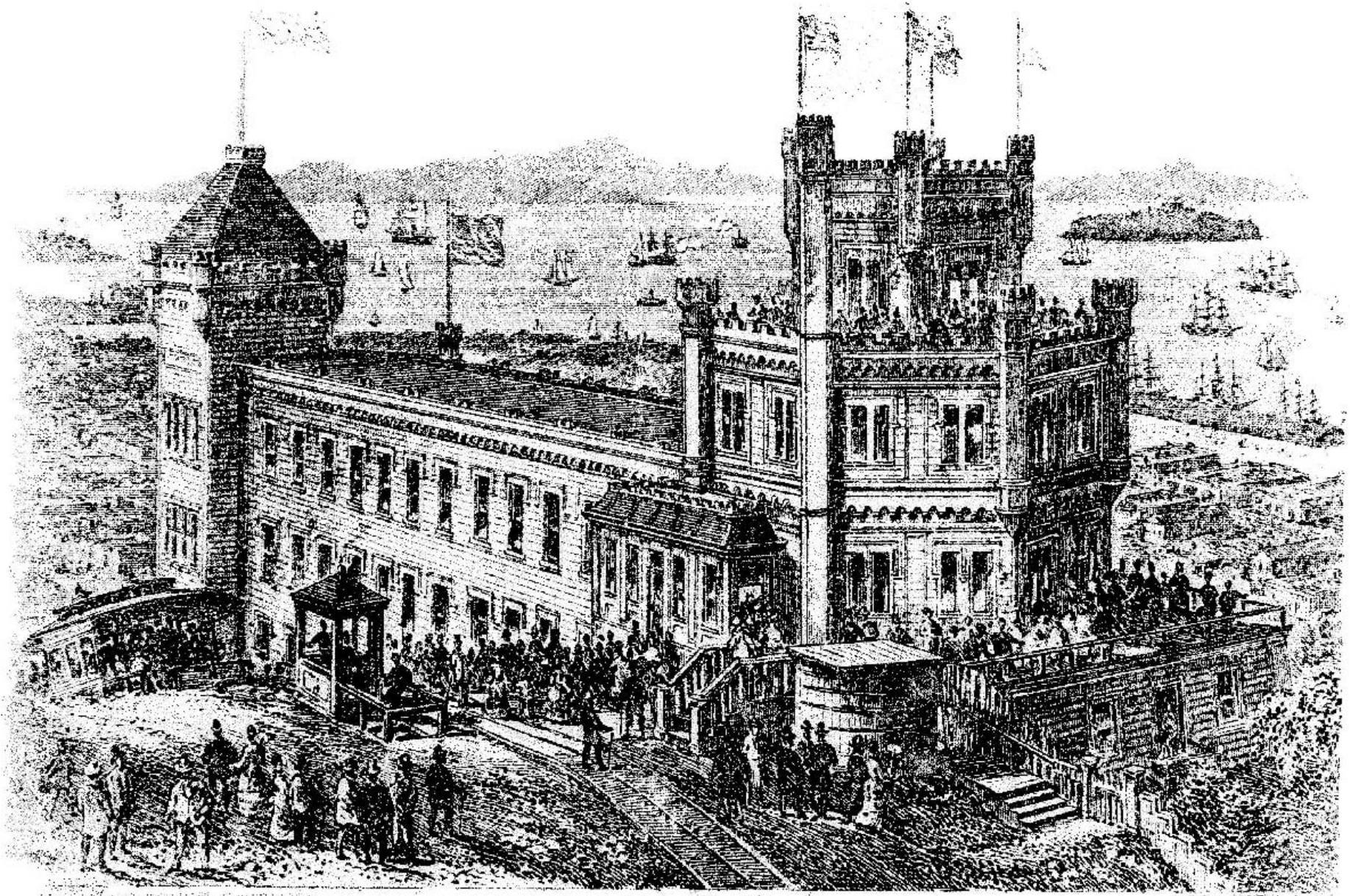
GRANT AVENUE STREET FAIR was held on June 15. At one time it was doubtful if a permit could be obtained, but, with the support of various civic clubs, including the Dwellers, a permit was authorized, and large crowds enjoyed the work of neighboring artists and craftsmen.

THE THIRD ANNUAL OPEN AIR CONCERT was held on the Filbert Steps, at the corner of Napier Lane, on Sunday afternoon, June 8. Sponsored by Edith Hyler and Grace Marchant (who somehow finds time to play the Hammond organ as well as manufacture jewelry and pottery), the pleasant voices provided enjoyment for an appreciative audience--some seated on chairs, more on the steps, and still more listened from neighboring balconies. Another concert is planned for next year.

THE LABEL OF "BLIGHTED AREA" AGAIN THREATENS sections of Telegraph Hill and North Beach. The City's eleven new building inspectors, currently canvassing the Western Addition, could come here next. A mass neighborhood protest against just such an ignominious "slum" classification several years ago staved off an unsavory commercial "redevelopment" enterprise which would have ruined the Hill. We are not blighted; we are just picturesque.
Some individuals have improved their property, some attractive new buildings have gone up, but many seriously substandard dwellings persist. Antiquity is not necessarily cause for condemnation; many superficially modernized buildings none-the-less violate electrical, plumbing and building codes. But unless offending buildings are spruced up (sometimes only minor repairs are needed), whole blocks could be needlessly razed to make way for "Urban Renewal"--and then where is the Hill's crazy charm?
"Neighborhood conservation through voluntary home improvement" is the slogan of the interim research committee appointed by the THD Board of Directors. This committee is currently exploring ways to provide property owners with expert advice on renovating, decorating, financing repairs, legal regulations, etc., in a community do-it-yourself "Operation Bootstrap". With the thought that it costs no more (and often less) to remodel tastefully, it is hoped that remodelling workshops and classes and even a home improvement clinic can be organized this fall. Architects, planners, social welfare workers, realtors, reporters, private firms, interested individuals, and even building inspectors have offered their time and professional advice to such a project. We want some reaction from you before we plunge in. Would you be interested in sharing in this program? Call Dennis Flynn(DO 2-0751), who is currently the clearing house for our ideas.

TELEGRAPH HILL SHERRY, as well as Schramsberger wines are on sale at Speedie's (the New Union Grocery). Also available are fresh fruits and vegetables, fine cuts of meat, liquor and recently they have added film for camera fans. Call at 301 Union, corner of Montgomery, or telephone EX 2-9638 for free delivery (adv.)

THE THIRD ANNUAL PEACH BLOSSOM FESTIVAL attracted some fifty people this year who came to Silvio Catelli's home on Alta Street to celebrate the coming of warm weather and view the three peach blossoms on his tree. Formerly in the insurance business, Sil now spends his time reading and reviewing books on California and San Francisco history.



"TELEGRAPH HILL OBSERVATORY," SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

BEATNIKS ON GRANT AVENUE - Some of our members live on Grant Avenue, some are artists and writers, but most follow other occupations. We have always counted among our friends these artists; they have helped us with our dances while we have supported them in their street fairs. However, a trend of several years' duration, accentuated recently by notoriety, has made the lives of many Grant Avenue residents miserable. Some people--we think largely from areas other than North Beach and Telegraph Hill -- have little regard for the rights of local citizens (many have lived here for decades). Noisy congregations on the streets in the wee small hours of the morning, breaking windows, damaging property and other serious complaints can no longer be tolerated. The residents, working during the day, have the right to a good night's sleep and safe, uncongested use of the streets and sidewalks. "The residents of Grant Avenue have become a minority group who are being denied their right to pursue their peaceful way of life", declared Robert Major, President of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. "We do not seek to infringe on the rights of others, or force them to conform to any pattern of life, but we do feel that the "non-conformists" should respect the rights of others and obey the laws applicable to everyone."

The Dwellers will direct their efforts to seek proper police surveillance to insure that the rights of the citizens are protected. By a letter dated August 12, President Major brought the need for increased policing to the attention of Mayor Christopher, Police Chief Ahern and the Board of Supervisors. The Police Department has set up a meeting with representatives of the Dwellers to take appropriate action in this matter.

RIDDLE FOR THE LADIES: What is the only concentrated soap powder that washes knit woolens scrumptiously without loss of size AND makes girdles last twice as long? Inexpensive, too. . .Give up? Well, go downtown to the Emporium's Cosmetics Dept., and ask Miss Payton or Miss Smith to tell you all about "Wash-a-Kit". They've used it themselves for some time and think very highly of it. (adv.)

WASHINGTON SQUARE: In the last few weeks, arrival of plants from the nursery has changed the appearance of Washington Square and we are promised a completed park shortly.

HAVE YOU SEEN JOHN DE MARTINI a work? John is the happy guy who goes about his job of keeping our streets clean. He has worked for the Department of Public Works for twelve years and in our area for the last four years. His territory includes Grant Avenue from Broadway to Filbert, then Stockton to Green and Columbus Avenue from Broadway to Chestnut. He takes pride in his work, perhaps because he has always lived in North Beach(he was born at Columbus and Mason). He covers his entire route once a day, and certain sections twice each day. To him, his friends and neighbors say thanks for a job well done.

THE PICTURE selected for this issue (our advertisers make these pictures financially possible, so be sure to patronize them) from your correspondent's collection came from the Society of California Pioneers. It shows the Telegraph Hill Observatory which was built in 1883 on Greenwich Street near Kearny.
The cable car line, shown in the drawing, was operated for only a few years. The Observatory had a restaurant, tavern, and a ballroom, but even with all of these features it was not a financial success. Later it was used as an athletic club, an artist's studio and then later a boarding house for the Gray Brothers- quarry workers. It was burned in a spectacular fire in July 1903.

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